

**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN SENTENCE STRUCTURE MASTERY  
AND ESSAY WRITING ABILITY OF THE SEVENTH SEMESTER  
STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM AT  
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY**

**A Thesis by**

**DINI SEPTIANI VIRGINANDA**

**Student Number: 06011281520081**

**English Education Study Program**

**Language and Arts Education Department**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY  
PALEMBANG  
2019**

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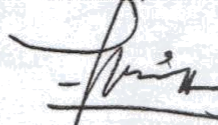
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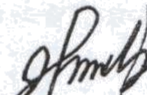
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A Thesis

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certify that thesis untitled "The Correlation between Sentence Structure Mastery and Essay Writing Ability of the Seventh Semester Students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or innappropriate quotation againts the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, Desember 2019

The Undersigned,

  
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## **DEDICATIONS AND MOTTOS**

This thesis is dedicated to:

- My beloved parents (S.Y and W.L)
- My beloved brother (D.A.N)

### **MOTTO**

- Do the best so that you can't blame yourself for anything.
- Do what you love. It will give you peace.
- Cry if you want to cry. Sometimes its okay not to be okay. Just take a breath.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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Palembang, Desember 2019  
The writer,

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The objectives of this study were to find out: (1) the extent to which the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University used a variety of sentence structures, (2) whether or not there was a significant correlation between sentence structures mastery and essay writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, (3) whether or not there is any contribution of sentence structures mastery and writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The sample of this study was 70 students of the seventh semester of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University chosen by using purposive sampling technique. The data were collected by using sentence structures test and essay writing test. The data were analyzed by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Simple Linear Regression in SPSS version 24. The results showed that: (1) The students' most mastery of sentence structures was simple sentences, followed by compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences, (2) there was a weak correlation between sentence structures mastery and essay writing ability as p-value (0.013) was lower than 0.05, (3) the contribution of sentence structures mastery to essay writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University was 8.7%.

**Keywords:** *Correlation, Sentence Structures Mastery, Essay Writing Ability.*

A thesis by an English Education Study Program Student, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University.

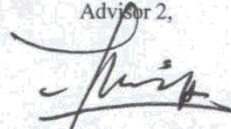
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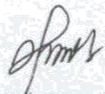
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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents: (1) background, (2) problems of the study, (3) objectives of the study, and (4) significance of the study.

#### **1. Background**

Language has a big role in life as humans are social creatures. Inderawati and Hayati (2015) state, "It is believed that human beings and language are deeply embedded in the sense that people own a language and use it to interact with others." Knowledge, ideas, opinions, feelings, and experiences are shared by using language. It can be in the form of spoken or written. However, the language in each place is different. To make the communication between people around the world to run effectively, there is a language that is used as an international language and that language is English.

It is no doubt that learning English is difficult since English is a foreign language for Indonesian. According to Panggabean (2015), the difficulty occurs because English is very different from Bahasa Indonesia in terms of Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax. Besides, there are four skills that should be mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Therefore, it makes learning English becomes more complicated.

As one of the language aspects, writing is an interesting skill to be discussed. Brown (2000, p.335) states, "Written products are often the result of thinking, drafting, and revising procedures that require specialized skills, skills that not every speaker develops naturally." Writing is not gained from natural process like speaking and listening. Writing skill should be trained and take a lot of time for someone to master it. Writing skill should be mastered by students because it is important for academic written communication, especially for those who took English major in university level. Abdullah (2014, p.1) states, "Students of any higher education institution need to be highly competent at writing for an academic audience." It means, the students should be able to produce a good piece of writing whether it is in the form of paper, essay, or thesis. Fajri, Inderawati, and

Mirizon (2015) add that writing can not be underestimated because the ability of writing can push people's carrer forward.

According to Nunan (2003), writing is a clearly complex process and competent writing is frequently accepted as being the last language skill to be acquired. It is complex because the writers not only produce opinion and idea but also compose it with correct structure and grammar, good diction, and accurate punctuation. Mulyaningsih, Rais, and Sulistyawati (2013) state that writing is very complex activity in which the writer has to put the ideas down on paper, transforms his thoughts into words first, sharpens his main ideas and gives the structure and coherent organization. Erlina, Hayati, and Jaya (2018) state, "Writing is considered the most difficult skill because the reader will not tolerate any mistakes generated by the author on the results of his writing because the error will be immediately visible and will disturb the meaning process made by the reader." Abdullah (2014) argues that writing is difficult because it requires explicit thought, ordered and well-organized content. Ismail (2011, p.73) adds, "Writing is really seen as a process of discovery as the writers try to find their way while they are struggling to think, compose, and put their ideas together." Dewi (2015) states that writing is a language skill which is not only expressive but also productive. It is expressive because writing lets the writers express their ideas and feelings into writing form and it is productive because it produces words, sentences, and paragraphs that have been through the process of thinking. Brown (2000) claims that the compositions of writing are supposed to meet certain standards that include content, organization, vocabulary use, language use, and mechanics. Thus, it can be concluded that writing is difficult skill to be mastered because of many factors.

There are some problems faced by students in writing. They have difficulties in presenting a good content, using proper grammar and sentence structure, and choosing good words or dictions (Gusman, Mukhaiyar, Kusni, 2014). Alfaki (2015) states that there were some linguistic issues that hamper students' effective writing in English which are mechanical problem, diction problem, grammatical problems, and sentence structure problem. It is related to

Putri (2016) that the problems faced by the fifth semester students of English Education Study Program of FKIP UNSRI are difficulties in developing ideas, using correct sentence structures and often doing grammar errors. Bilal, Freed, and Ashraf (2016) also mention, "Learners have difficulties in grammar and syntax. The errors usually occur in subject-verb agreement, pronouns, tenses, articles, prepositions and basic sentence structures."

An interview of the sixth semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University revealed that the students had problems in creating the ideas, arranging the content into a good form, and constructing sentences with proper grammar and structure. They also said that they lacked the knowledge of sentence varieties so the ideas are mostly poured into simple sentences and compound sentences.

Apart from the other aspects in writing, language use has a relation with writing. Language use describes how the sentences are arranged with the right subject and verb agreement, tense, word order, articles, pronoun, preposition. It is very unfortunate if good ideas or thoughts are poured into a wrong arrangement of sentences. These ideas and thoughts must be organized well into the good sentences.

Generating sentences is a necessary part in writing. Sentence is a group of words that has complete meaning. It starts with a capital letter and ends with a period. Cahyono, Mukminatien, and Amrina (2016, p.23) state, "A sentence refers to a group of words containing a noun phrase (NP) as the subject and a verb phrase (VP) as the predicate." According to its structure, sentences are classified into four types; simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound complex sentence. Those sentences are called sentence structures in syntax.

Sentence structure is a part of grammar and the sentence structure itself comes from the grammatical arrangement of words. Sentence structure can be used to make a variety of sentences or give a style in our writing. It also can be used to avoid monotony in writing. Using the same sentence pattern in writing

will make the content of the writing become flat and boring. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007, p.153):

Good writing requires variation of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. A writing which consisting with only short and simple sentences are consider to be boring an ineffective. To make writing more mature, interesting, and effective in style, the use of complex sentences and participial phrases, and structure that use subordination are required.

Similarly, Muhsin (2015, p.2) mentions, “Good writing requires good working knowledge of grammar, and also the art of using rhetoric of arranging words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as the way to attract readers attention.” Hedge (1988) adds that to make writing become effective, it needs a number of things and one of them is careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures in order to build a style which is relevant to the subject matter and the eventual readers. Therefore, in order to make the writing become more life, it is better to vary the sentence by using sentence structure. Besides, the variety of sentences also can be used to attract readers’ interest to read our writing.

Jagaiah (2017, p.3) states, “The ability to construct syntactically complex sentences at higher grades enables students to manipulate varied sentence structures to create different stylistic effects.” Students who have problem in sentence structure are not able to make a longer sentence and more likely to produce a simple sentence. Abdullah (2014) states that due to the lack of sentence pattern mastery, students stick to use the same sentence pattern. Many of them choose to „play safe“ by using simple sentence in composing a piece of writing. This case happens because they want to avoid mistakes. Based on the interview of the sixth semester students of English Education Sriwijaya University, most of the students preferred to use simple and compound sentences because it was easier to



create and contains less chance of error. Some of them even avoided complex sentences and compound-complex sentences because these two types of sentences are too complicated and the students are not sure whether their sentences were already in the right form.

Saddler (2009) mentions that the basic part of written language is sentences, but the teachers put little attention in teaching how to build various good sentences which brings to the fact that very little emphasis has been put on the importance of sentence variety in writing subject. As the result, students do not master sentence structure and often make mistakes in constructing sentences. It can be proved by some studies about error analysis in writing. Lin (2002) analyzed 26 essays written by Taiwanese EFL college students. The result showed that there were four most frequent error types which are sentence structure (30%), wrong verb forms (21%), sentence fragments (15.9%), and wrong use of words (15.9%). Those errors of sentence structures which were found in students' writing will impact their writing score since sentence structures is part of language use and language use has 25% of contribution in assessing writing.

To strengthen the statements above, the writer put some previous studies investigating the relationship between sentence structures and writing. The study conducted by Dewi (2015) showed that there was a positive correlation between sentence structure mastery and writing skill. It means the more students master the sentence structure, the better their writing skill will be. Then, the study conducted by Ridwan (2017) showed that sentence structures have a significant effect on students' writing skill.

Based on the explanation above, the writer was interested to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between sentence structure mastery and essay writing ability. So the writer conducted a research study entitled: **“The Correlation between Sentence Structure Mastery and Essay Writing Ability of the Seventh Semester Students of English Education Study Program of Sriwijaya University.”**

## **1.2 The Problems of the Study**

Based on the background above, the problems of this study are formulated into the following questions:

1. To what extent do the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University use a variety of sentence structures?
2. Is there any significant correlation between sentence structures mastery and essay writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University?
3. Is there any contribution between sentence structures mastery and writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University?

## **1.3 The Objectives of the Study**

In relation to the problems above, the objectives of this study are:

1. to find out the extent to which seventh semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University use a variety of sentence structures.
2. to find out whether or not there is a significant correlation between sentence structures mastery and essay writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University.
3. to find out whether or not there is any contribution of sentence structures mastery and writing ability of the seventh semester students of English Education Study Program of Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Sriwijaya University.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The result of this study was expected to be useful for the following parties. First, the students were hoped to realize that mastery of sentence structures was important because using the same sentence length or sentence type in the whole piece of writing could grow monotony. The use of four types of sentences were hoped to help them created style in their writing and reduce repetition, so it could attract readers to read it. Besides, mastery of sentence structure was also expected to help them in improving their writing ability. Second, the teachers of English were hoped that they would be more aware about the importance of sentence structure in writing so they could give deeper explanation about sentence structure and taught how to construct good or varied sentences to the students. Besides, by knowing the importance of sentence structure, it was also hoped that the teachers encouraged the students to use variety of sentences in writing, so the students were not stick to use simple sentence and compound sentence. Furthermore, this study was expected to give valuable information and it could be useful as a reference for the future researcher.

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